



**CITY OF SCOTTSDALE
McDOWELL SONORAN PRESERVE COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING**

**Thursday, March 1, 2012
Florence Ely Nelson Desert Park
8950 E. Pinnacle Peak Road
Scottsdale, AZ 85255**

MINUTES

PRESENT: James Heitel, Chairman
Fred Klein, Vice Chairman
Susan Wheeler, Commissioner
Rand Hubbell, Commissioner (arrived 5:08 p.m.)
Marg Nelssen, Commissioner
Robert Frost, Commissioner
Con Englehorn, Commissioner

STAFF: Bill Murphy
Kroy Ekblaw
Claire Miller
Robbin Schweitzer
Scott Hamilton

GUESTS: Mike Nolan
Taryl O'Shea
Shannon Linder
Donavan Sarka,

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Heitel called the meeting to order at 5:04 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL

Members present as noted above.

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no members of the public who wished to speak.

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Approval of the Regular Meeting minutes of February 2, 2012

COMMISSIONER FROST MOVED TO APPROVE THE FEBRUARY 2, 2012 REGULAR MEETING MINUTES OF THE MCDOWELL SONORAN PRESERVE COMMISSION. SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER ENGLEHORN, THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY WITH A VOTE OF SIX (6) TO ZERO (0). COMMISSIONER HUBBELL WAS NOT YET PRESENT.

5. MCDOWELL SONROAN CONSERVANCY UPDATE

Mr. Nolan updated the Commission on Conservancy activities including trail patrols, maintenance during the Challenge, nature guides, guided public hikes, steward program training, and the research program.

7. SPECIAL USES

Mr. Ekblaw recalled that there was one issue with the guidelines because of a paragraph added prohibiting competitive special uses. Concern from the legal department was that a prohibition of that type should be part of the Ordinance. The Commission wanted a better sense of events that might have a competitive aspect.

Mr. Hamilton reviewed the guidelines and how they were developed. The main purpose is to have compliance with goals from a management perspective. When the guidelines came to the Commission for approval, they recommended the addition of the clause prohibiting competitive events. He noted that the general guidelines do include a clause about breaking into smaller groups. Because the guidelines have not been formalized, the Commission has the opportunity to continue discussion.

Mike Nolan gave an overview of the impacts of competitive events from the perspective of the Conservancy and competitive event producers Shannon Linder from Arizona Trail Race, Taryl O'Shea from the Arabian Horse Association of Arizona, and Donovan Sarka discussed their respective events and what impacts they would have on the Preserve. The Commission was given the opportunity to ask questions during the presentations.

COMMISSIONER FROST MOVED TO DELETE THE PARAGRAPH PERTAINING TO COMPETITIVE EVENTS. COMMISSIONER ENGLEHORN SECONDED THE MOTION.

Discussion ensued regarding staging of competitive events, potential effects competitive events could have on the Preserve, and the ability of Preserve staff to evaluate events and make recommendations to the Commission on individual events.

COMMISSIONER FROST AMENDED THE MOTION, MOVING TO DELETE THE PARAGRAPH PERTAINING TO COMPETITIVE EVENTS AND RELY ON STAFF EXPERTISE TOGETHER WITH INPUT FROM THE CONSERVANCY IN RECOMMENDING APPROVAL OF EVENTS TO THE COMMISSION. COMMISSIONER ENGLEHORN AFFIRMED HIS SECOND AND THE MOTION

CARRIED WITH A VOTE OF SIX (6) TO ONE (1). COMMISSIONER KLEIN DISSENTED.

Mr. Ekblaw said that the legal department would review the amended language and the item would be agendaized for action in April.

6. COMMISSION BYLAWS

Mr. Murphy distributed the bylaws with the previously suggested amendments, noting that the legal department is fine-tuning the template.

Discussion ensued regarding the regular McDowell Sonoran Preserve Commission meeting schedule.

7. SPECIAL USES

Discussed above.

8. DDC UPDATE

Mr. Nolan distributed information regarding the history of the Desert Discovery Center, the work of Swaback Partners, and an analysis done by Robert Brais from ConsultEcon. He reviewed the Desert Discover Center Phase III Committee recommendations. The Committee's key findings were:

- The committee strongly supports the location, concept and vision of the DDC project as a premier education and tourism facility.
- The ultimate success of the DDC will depend on the selection of a highly qualified operator.
- Timing for funding is critical and the current economic conditions are not conducive to public and private fundraising.
- The City should continue to allocate resources to keep the DDC project moving forward by immediately initiating the RFP process for operator selection and assessing the appropriate timing for the public and private funding campaign.
- The City should continue to monitor the economic conditions on an annual basis to determine when the funding goals can be met. This committee or, once selected, the DDC operator should assist with this evaluation.

Discussion ensued regarding the three phases and Council and the McDowell Sonoran Preserve Commission's involvement in the process, Commissioner concerns about the recommendations, and the opportunity for Commissioners to speak during the public comment period at the March 27th City Council meeting.

9. STAFF REPORTS

- **Land Acquisition**

Mr. Ekblaw noted that Council voted to oppose HB 2336, the Growing Smarter bill, and the chair of the Appropriations Committee indicated to Governmental Affairs that the bill is in the drawer.

Mr. Ekblaw said that he met with the State Land Department on the SLUP and expects to move forward with the 300 acres at Pima and Dynamite and present to Council in April.

Commissioners were given the opportunity to make comments.

- **Financial Report**

Mr. Ekblaw said there were no updates on the financial report.

- **Commission Work Plan**

Mr. Ekblaw noted that the Commission work plan is identical to the one previously distributed with the historical content removed. Intent is for staff to use the work plan as a regular tool for updating the Commission on the process.

- **North Area Planning**

Mr. Hamilton gave an update on the trail and trailhead construction. Staff began the process of updating the north area trail plan by getting input from users in December. In conjunction with land acquisitions, staff has been creating a plan for gates, signs, and fences.

- **Current Projects Update**

Ms. Miller said that work is continuing on perimeter security issues and projects, including fence lines, signage, signage replacement, and working with the Police Department. Current community service projects include restoration of damaged land.

9. COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

Commissioner Wheeler requested that a discussion about allowing horses in washes in the Preserve be agendaized.

10. AGENDA ITEMS FOR APRIL 5, 2012

- Special Uses
- Commission Bylaws

11. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 7:18 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
A/V Tronics, Inc. DBA AVTranz.